DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 368 321 HE 027 346

AUTHOR Tierney, William G.; Rhoads, Robert A.
TITLE Enhancing Promotion, Tenure and Beyond: Faculty Socialization as a Cultural Process. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION Association for the Study of Higher Education.; ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, Washington, D.C.; George Washington Univ., Washington, DC. School of Education and Human Development.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO EDO-HE-93-6
PUB DATE Apr 94
CONTRACT RR930200
NOTE 4p.; For the full report, see HE 027 347.
AVAILABLE FROM ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports, The George Washington University, One Dupont Circle, Suite 630, Washington, DC 20036-1183 ($1).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adjustment (to Environment); Beginning Teachers; *College Faculty; Cultural Context; *Cultural Influences; Faculty College Relationship; *Faculty Development; *Faculty Promotion; Graduate Study; Higher Education; Nontenured Faculty; *Socialization; Tenure
IDENTIFIERS ERIC Digests; *Organizational Culture

ABSTRACT

This digest is a brief summary of a longer monograph of the same title on the importance of understanding faculty socialization as a cultural process in the context of the current changes urged on higher education. A section on how faculty socialization is conceptualized adopts a view of culture in which culture shapes and is shaped by social interaction. Consequently, to understand faculty means to come to terms with the cultural forces which shape faculty lives. These include the culture of the profession, the disciplinary culture, the institutional culture, and individual cultural differences. The monograph argues that faculty socialization takes place in two general stages: first, during their own undergraduate and graduate learning experiences and, second, during the organizational stage when new faculty face organizational challenges. It is also noted that, while faculty adapt to their institutions and cultures, institutions in turn adapt to their faculty members. The implications of such an understanding of the nature and importance of faculty socialization are shown to include the possibility of confusion and misinterpretation which is especially problematic during the tenure process and the need for clearly articulated organizational goals and objectives. Coming to terms with faculty socialization offers the key to many questions of organizational culture, commitment and mission. (JB)

April 1994
EDO-HE-93-6

ERIC® DIGEST

ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education; The George Washington University; One Dupont Circle, Suite 630; Washington, DC 20036

Enhancing Promotion, Tenure and Beyond: Faculty Socialization as a Cultural Process

William G. Tierney and Robert A. Rhoads

ED 368 321

HE027 346

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

April 1994
EDO-HE-93-6

ERIC® DIGEST

ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education; The George Washington University; One Dupont Circle, Suite 630; Washington, DC 20036

Enhancing Promotion, Tenure and Beyond: Faculty Socialization as a Cultural Process

William G. Tierney and Robert A. Rhoads

What Is the Significance of Faculty Socialization?

Over the last two decades, higher education has come under attack. At the center of much of the criticism lies the United States professorate. Some critics believe that faculty emphasize research at the expense of quality teaching. Others believe that faculty fail to adequately address today's diverse student body. In either case, understanding the many roles faculty play in the formal and informal life of college and university settings is critical if we are to improve our academic organizations.

The multiple roles faculty adopt reflect their learning experiences--their socialization. Hence, understanding faculty socialization is imperative if we are to change our academic settings.

How Is Faculty Socialization Conceptualized?

The values, beliefs, and attitudes held by faculty reflect their socialization experiences and, in essence, mirror faculty culture. In examining faculty socialization through faculty culture, we adopt Geertz's view of culture where culture shapes and is shaped by social interaction (1973). To understand faculty socialization--how faculty learn to be faculty--we first must come to terms with the cultural forces which shape faculty life: the national culture, the culture of the profession, the disciplinary culture, the institutional culture, and individual cultural differences (Clark 1987).

Faculty socialization takes place in two general stages. The anticipatory stage includes undergraduate and especially graduate learning experiences. During graduate school, prospective faculty are intimately exposed to the norms of the professorate. At the conclusion of the graduate experience, prospective faculty have a solid understanding of what faculty life is like.

As graduate students leave their student status behind and are hired as new faculty, they enter the second stage of faculty socialization--the organizational stage. During this stage, faculty novices face a number of organizational challenges through which they often muddle by trial and error (Van Maanen and Schein 1979). For many new faculty, the first two years are characterized by loneliness and intellectual isolation, lack of collegial support, and heavy work loads and time constraints (Boice 1992).

While significant numbers of new faculty leave academe, many find ways of coping with the stress of academic life and move from their novice status to more senior roles. Central to faculty advancement is the promotion and tenure process. From a cultural perspective, promotion and tenure practices serve as rites of passage to higher organizational status.

Although the early years of faculty life may be the most challenging, experienced faculty also face organizational obstacles which require ongoing learning. In this light, faculty socialization must be seen as a continuous process where even the most senior faculty must learn and relearn their roles within academic institutions.

In addition to being ongoing, socialization is bidirectional. Not only do people adapt to organizations, but organizations continually must adapt to their members. Viewing faculty socialization as bidirectional is crucial in creating diverse academic communities. While professors change to meet the demands of their academic institutions, colleges and universities must modify their structures to meet the needs of their diverse members. This means promotion and tenure rituals, as well as faculty development programs, must be continually reviewed.

What Are the Implications?

Organizational culture is complex, and individuals who are new to an organization will interpret that culture in different ways. Messages get confused and misinterpreted. Our contention is that the organizational messages related to succeeding as a faculty member--achieving tenure, for example--need to be clearly spelled out so that all organizational members have similar information from which to make decisions. In other words, faculty socialization should take place within the parameters of clearly articulated organizational goals and objectives.

The issues raised throughout this report relate to culture and commitment: What are the values to which academic organizations aspire? How do they communicate those values to organizational members? How do organizations affirm those values through various organizational structures? Our argument throughout this monograph is that coming to terms with faculty socialization holds answers to the preceding questions.

Selected References

Bolce, R. 1992. *The New Faculty Member.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Boyer, E.L. 1990. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professorate.* Princeton, N.J.: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. ED 326 149. 151 pp. MF-07. PC not available. EDRS.

Fink, L.D. 1984. *The First Year of College Teaching.* New Directions for Teaching and Learning No. 17. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jarvis, D.K. 1991. *Junior Faculty Development: A Handbook.* New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

Schuster, J.H., and D.W. Wheeler, eds. 1990. *Enhancing Faculty Careers: Strategies for Development and Renewal.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sorcinelli, M.D., and A.E. Austin. 1992. *Developing New and Junior Faculty.* New Directions for Teaching and Learning No. 50. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Weimer, M. 1990. *Improving College Teaching: Strategies for Developing Instructional Effectiveness.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This ERIC digest is based on a new full-length report in the ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report series, prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education in cooperation with the Association for the Study of Higher Education, and published by the School of Education at the George Washington University. Each report is a definitive review of the literature and institutional practice on a single critical issue. Many administrators subscribe to the series and circulate reports to staff and faculty committees with responsibility in a report's topic area. Reports are available through subscriptions for $98.00 per year ($108.00 outside the U.S.). Subscriptions begin with Report 1 and conclude with Report 8 of the current series year. Single copies, at $18.00 each, are available from: ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports, The George Washington University, One Dupont Circle, Suite 630, Washington, DC 20036-1183. Or phone (202) 296-2597.

This publication was partially prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. ED RR-93-0200. The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or the department.

The George Washington University
WASHINGTON DC